



REMARKS

Claims 1-78 are pending in this reissue application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims are respectfully requested.

The Examiner objected to Claim 26 because of certain informality. Applicant has corrected the informality in Claim 26 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

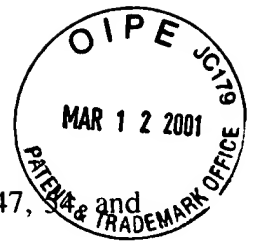
The Examiner rejected Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Gulick (U.S. Patent No. 5,763,801). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Gulick was filed in the United States on March 25, 1996. On the other hand, the original patent upon which this instant reissue application is filed, U.S. Patent No. 5,696,342, is entitled to a foreign application priority date of July 5, 1995 under 35 U.S.C. § 119. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's citation of Gulick under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is improper and should be withdrawn, and that Claim 20 is in condition for allowance. See MPEP 2136.03 (citing In re Hilmer, 359 F.2d 859, 149 U.S.P.Q. 480 (CCPA 1966)).

The Examiner rejected Claims 20, 26, 28, 30-39, 41, 44, 51, 57-66, and 68-77 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Tamura (U.S. Patent No. 5,895,877). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Tamura was filed in the United States on May 17, 1996. On the other hand, the original patent upon which this instant reissue application is filed, U.S. Patent No. 5,696,342, is entitled to a foreign application priority date of July 5, 1995 under 35 U.S.C. § 119. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's citation of Tamura under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is improper and should be withdrawn, and that Claims 20, 26, 28, 30-39, 41, 44, 51, 57-66, and 68-77 are in condition for allowance. Id.

The Examiner rejected Claims 23, 46, 47, 54, and 56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gulick. This rejection is respectfully traversed. As previously mentioned, Gulick is improperly cited as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Accordingly, the Examiner's use of Gulick as prior art for bases of rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is improper, and the rejection



should be withdrawn. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Claims 23, 46, 47, and 56 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner rejected Claims 27, 29, 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tamura in view of Gulick. This rejection is respectfully traversed. As previously discussed, both Tamura and Gulick are improperly cited as prior art references under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Accordingly, the Examiner's use these references as bases for rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper and is respectfully traversed. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that Claims 27, 29, and 42 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner objected to Claims 21-22, 40, 45, 52-53, 67, and 78 as being dependent upon rejected base claims. Applicant respectfully submits that, in view of the foregoing, all of the pending independent claims in the present reissue application are in condition for allowance, and that claims 21-22, 40, 45, 52-53, 67, and 78 are according in condition for allowance without further amendment.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present reissue application are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims are respectfully requested and an early allowance is solicited. If the Examiner feels that it would advance the prosecution of the application, it is respectfully requested that he telephone the undersigned attorney.

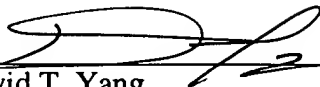
In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 393032015900. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.



Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 9, 2001

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